

REMARKS

Claims 1-3, 6-7, and 10-24 are pending in this application. By this Response, claims 1-3 and 6-7 are amended, claims 4-5 and 8-9 are canceled, and claims 10-24 are added. Support for the amendments to the claims may be found at least in Figures 7 and 8 of the present specification. Support for the addition of claims 10-24 may be found at least in Figures 4-8 of the present specification. No new matter has been added by any of the amendments to claims 1-3 and 6-7 or the addition of claims 10-24. Reconsideration of the claims is respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

I. Telephone Interview

Applicants' representative is currently attempting to schedule a telephone interview with the Examiner. However, in the event that such an interview has not been conducted prior to the Examiner's reviewing of this Response, Applicants' respectfully request that the Examiner contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the telephone number listed below to conduct a telephone interview to discuss the issues in the present application. In Applicants' opinion, such a telephone interview would expedite prosecution of the application.

II. Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 101

The Office Action rejects claims 1-5 and 8 under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as being allegedly directed to non-statutory subject matter. This rejection is moot with regard to canceled claims 4-5 and 8 and is respectfully traversed with regard to the remaining claims.

With regard to claim 1, the Office Action alleges that this claim is directed to non-statutory subject matter because the claim allegedly recites only steps for defining functions without actually implementing the functions or otherwise making them available for use as stored executable code. Moreover, the Office Action alleges that

claim 1 does not recite any practical application that produces a useful, concrete and tangible result.

By this Response, claim 1 is amended to recite steps of processing user input, accessing a multidimensional electronic spreadsheet, and performing an identified operation which comprises analyzing a first source cell range, computing a content of each cell within the first source cell range, creating a version instance, and copying the second source range. These are not simply steps of "defining functions" but are rather explicit operations performed within the computer system. Furthermore, the claimed invention does provide a useful, concrete and tangible result in that option combinations may be defined and versions of cell ranges in an electronic spreadsheet may be generated for each of the defined option combinations to thereby provide different versions of a model represented by the multidimensional electronic spreadsheet for different combinations of options.

With regard to claim 8, the Office Action alleges that claim 8 recites a series of means which may be reasonably interpreted as software routines and thus, the claim lacks any hardware necessary to realize any of the underlying functionality. By this Response, claim 8 is canceled. However, a new system claim, claim 15, has been added that recites hardware mechanisms including a processor and a memory coupled to the processor. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 15 is directed to statutory subject matter. Accordingly, in view of the above, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-3 under 35 U.S.C. § 101.

III. Objection to the Specification

The Office Action objects to the specification stating that the term "computer-usable medium" is not present in the specification. By this Response, the specification is amended to include the term "computer usable medium" with particular reference to the example computer usable medium originally presented in the application, i.e. system memory 102 and disk memory 107 of Figure 1, and their equivalents. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the objection to the specification.

IV. Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The Office Action rejects claims 1-9 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Greif et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,371,675) in view of Douglas Hergert, Mastering 1-2-3® 97 Edition for Windows® 95, Sybex Inc., San Francisco, CA, © 1997, pp. 123-127, 130-147, 248-267, 277-279, 436-489, 615-621, 664-666 and 672-674. This rejection is moot with regard to canceled claims 4-5 and 8-9 and is respectfully traversed with regard to the remaining claims 1-3 and 6-7.

Amended claim 1 reads as follows:

1. A method, implemented on a computer system, of handling user-defined options during a copy and paste operation or a cut and paste operation within a multi dimensional electronic spreadsheet comprising a plurality of cells identified by a cell address along each dimension, said method comprising the steps of:
 - processing a first user input, wherein the first user input defines one or a plurality of option combinations, each option combination comprising a plurality of options, wherein each option in the plurality of options has an associated identifier and an associated value;
 - accessing, in the computer system, the multidimensional electronic spreadsheet, wherein the multidimensional electronic spreadsheet includes at least one cell that references an identifier of at least one option of the plurality of options;
 - processing a second user input, wherein the second user input selects a first source cell range of the multidimensional electronic spreadsheet and a destination cell range of the multidimensional electronic spreadsheet;
 - processing a third user input identifying an operation to execute, wherein the operation to execute is either a copy and paste operation, or a cut and paste operation; and
 - performing the identified operation, wherein performing the identified operation comprises:
 - analyzing the first source cell range, for each defined option combination, to determine if at least one cell in the first source cell range comprises a reference to one or more options of the plurality of options of the defined option combination; and
 - for each option combination in which the first source cell range has at least one cell that references one or more options of the plurality of options of the defined option combination, performing the following operations:

computing a content of each cell within the first source cell range to thereby generate a second source cell range, wherein contents of the at least one cell are computed according to the referenced one or more options of the plurality of options based on a corresponding value associated with the referenced one or more options defined in a current option combination;
creating a version instance of the destination cell range in the multidimensional electronic spreadsheet; and
copying the second source range of cells into the version instance.

(emphasis added)

Neither Greif nor Hergert, either alone or in combination, teach or suggest those features of claim 1 emphasized above.

Greif is directed to a versionable spreadsheet program which implements alternative range references. As recognized by the Office Action, Grief teaches the ability to define a range of cells as part of an “alternative” and that such “alternatives” may be part of a “scenario,” but does not teach defining source and destination cell ranges to set up a cut/copy and paste operation. The Office Action goes on to allege that Hergert teaches the use of a graphical user interface to execute a paste command after a copy is made to a system clipboard. The Office Action further alleges that Hergert teaches a cut-and-paste operation and that such operations are well known for electronic documents.

While Greif teaches versioning of a spreadsheet and Hergert teaches cut-and-paste operations, Applicants respectfully submit that neither Greif nor Hergert, either alone or in combination, teach or even suggest any of the specific features recited in claim 1 as emphasized above. Specifically, neither reference, either alone or in combination, teaches or suggests the step of “analyzing a first source cell range...” or the series of steps including computing a content of each cell within the first source cell range, creating a version instance of the destination cell range, and copying the second source range of cells into the version instance, for each option combination in which the first source cell range has at least one cell that references one or more options of the plurality of options of the defined option combination.

Nowhere in Greif is there any teaching or suggestion regarding a copy/cut-and-paste operation, as recognized by the Office Action. Moreover, nowhere in Greif is there any teaching or suggestion that such a copy/cut-and-paste operation involves analyzing a first source cell range, for each defined option combination, to determine if at least one cell in the first source range comprises a reference to one or more options of the plurality of options of the defined option combination. In Greif, assuming the Examiner is considering the alternatives to be allegedly equivalent to the options in the presently claimed invention and the scenarios as being allegedly equivalent to the option combinations, nowhere in Greif is there any teaching or suggestion regarding a copy/cut-and-paste operation that comprises analyzing a range of cells in a spreadsheet, for each scenario, to determine if any cell has a reference to an alternative defined in the scenario.

Hergert does not teach or suggest this feature either. While Hergert teaches the cut-and-paste operation that most people are generally familiar with as being present in most Microsoft based software, there is no teaching or suggestion in Hergert regarding the operations specified in claim 1 that make up the cut-and-paste or copy-and-paste operation of the presently claimed invention. Namely, nowhere in Hergert is there any teaching or suggestion to analyze a first source cell range, for each defined option combination, to determine if at least one cell in the first source range comprises a reference to one or more options of the plurality of options of the defined option combination. The sections of Hergert cited by the Office Action describing moving ranges of data in a spreadsheet using a cut-and-paste operation (pages 123-127), copying formulas, changing values in a cell to perform "what if" scenarios (pages 130-147), depreciation and other mathematical functions (pages 248-267), logical functions (pages 277-279), creating versions of a worksheet, worksheet tools, (pages 436-489), the MIRR, NPER, NPV, and PAYMT functions (pages 615-621), various logical functions (pages 664-666), and the TRUE and FALSE functions that return logical values of 1 or 0 (pages 672-674). However, in none of these sections is there any teaching or suggestion to perform such analysis of a source cell range as part of a copy/cut-and-paste operation.

Moreover, nowhere in Greif of Hergert is there any teaching or suggestion to perform the computing, creating, or copying operations set forth in claim 1 for each option combination in which the first source cell range has at least one cell that

references one or more options of the plurality of options of the defined option combination. To the contrary, Greif merely teaches the ability to allow a user to specify a range alternative and to include that range alternative in a scenario. There is no teaching in Greif to compute, for each option combination in which an option is referenced by a cell in a first source cell range, the content of each cell within the first source cell range to thereby generate a second source cell range, wherein contents of the at least one cell are computing according to the reference one or more options of the plurality of options based on a corresponding value associated with the referenced one or more options defined in a current option combination. Similarly, Greif does not provide any teaching or suggestion to create a version instance of a destination cell range and copy the second source cell range into the version instance for each option combination in which an option is reference by a cell in a first source cell range.

Likewise, while Hergert teaches versioning of worksheets, there is nothing in the description of such versioning that teaches or suggests these operations of a copy/cut-and-paste operation set forth in claim 1. Since neither Greif nor Hergert teach or suggest such features, any alleged combination of Greif and Hergert, assuming such a combination were possible and one were somehow motivated to make such a combination, would not result in these features being taught or suggested.

In view of the above, Applicants respectfully submit that neither Greif nor Hergert, either alone or in combination, teach or suggest the features of independent claim 1. At least by virtue of their dependency on claim 1, neither Greif nor Hergert, either alone or in combination, teach or suggest the features of dependent claims 2-3 and 6-7. In addition, dependent claims 2-3 and 6-7 recite additional features which, when taken alone or in combination with the features of independent claim 1, are not taught or suggested by Greif and Hergert. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-3 and 6-7 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

V. Newly Added Claims

Claims 10-24 are added by this Response to recite additional features of the present invention. Specifically, claim 10 is added to recite outputting an interactive user

interface including a first portion for displaying a listing of defined options that are able to be referenced in cells of the spreadsheet and a second portion for specifying option combinations by specifying values for a plurality of the defined options in the first portion. Claim 11 is added to recite that the options are defined as Boolean variables whose value can be set to "true" or "false." Claim 12 is added to recite that if the option has a value of "true," the option is represented as a numerical "1" in the contents of the cells of the spreadsheet and if the option has a value of "false," the option is represented as a numerical "0" in the contents of the cells of the spreadsheet.

Claim 13 is added to recite selecting a cell from a plurality of cells and outputting an interactive user interface for applying one or more options of the plurality of options to the selected cell, wherein the interactive user interface includes a field for specifying an option to apply and a field for identifying a logical operation for applying the specified option to the selected cell. Claim 14 is added to recite that the logical operation may be a logical Add, a logical Multiply, or a logical Or operation.

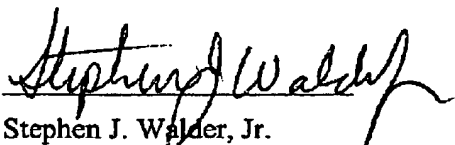
Claims 15 and 24 are added to recite system and computer usable medium versions of method claim 1. Claims 16-23 are added to recite system versions of method claims 2-3, 6, and 10-14. Prompt and favorable consideration of newly added claims 10-24 is respectfully requested.

VI. Conclusion

It is respectfully urged that the subject application is now in condition for allowance. The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number if in the opinion of the Examiner such a telephone conference would expedite or aid the prosecution and examination of this application.

Respectfully submitted,

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